

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 HA-05
FRB-03 /066 W

-----118603 070711Z /11

O R 070200Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO SECSTATE IMMEDIATE 2038
AMEBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, BL
SUBJECT: PEREDA PLEDGES RETURN TO DEMOCRACY WITHIN 2 YEARS

1. SUMMARY. IN HIS AUGUST 6 NATIONAL DAY ADDRESS, PRESIDENT JUAN PEREDA STATED HIS INTENTION TO RETURN BOLIVIA TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE WITHIN A PERIOD OF NOT LONGER THAN 24 MONTHS. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS TIME FRAME COULD BE "MODIFIED" UPON THE JOINT RECOMMENDATION OF THE ARMED FORCES, THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES, WHICH HE CALLED ON TO HELP ELABORATE NEW ELECTORAL PROCEDURES. CHARACTERIZING HIS GOVERNMENT AS "TRANSITIONAL," PEREDA SAID HE WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS. IN THE INTERIM, HE PLEDGED TO ENGAGE IN "FRANK DIALOGUE" WITH ALL NATIONAL GROUPS AND TO WORK TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY. END SUMMARY.

2. PEREDA BEGAN HIS SPEECH BY STATING THAT BOLIVIA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE HAD NOT YET ENDED. LIKE
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OTHER THIRD WORLDCOUNTRIES, IT CONTINUED TO SUFFER UNDER "FOREIGN DOMINATION" AND THE "ARROGANCE OF THOSE (NATIONS) WHICH LABOR UNDER THE WEIGHT OF OLD MYTHS AND PREJUDICES." DEFENDING BOLIVIA'S RIGHT TO DETERMINE ITS OWN "METHODS OF WORK AND STRUGGLE," PEREDA LASHED OUT AT FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS WHICH ATTEMPTED TO IMPOSE THEIR "UNILATERAL CONCEPTS OF (POLITICAL) MODELS."

3. HAVING DISPENSED WITH THE FOREIGN INTERFERENCE ISSUE, PEREDA WENT ON TO CHARACTERIZE HIS GOVERNMENT AS ONE OF "DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION." HE TERMED DEMOCRACY THE "BEST SYSTEM OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATION," BUT SAID THAT COMPLETE LIBERTY WAS A "RELATIVE" CONCEPT AS LONG AS HUMAN NECESSITY REMAINED. PEREDA ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE JULY ELECTIONS HAD BEEN DEFECTIVE, BUT MAINTAINED THAT THEY WERE NO WORSE THAN IN PAST YEARS. TO ORGANIZE A TRULY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, HE SAID, A "CONSTRUCTIVE UNDERSTANDING" WAS REQUIRED. HE THEN INVITED THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELABORATION OF NEW ELECTORAL PROCEDURES.

4. PEREDA SAID IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO STRUCTURE THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, AND MAINTAINED THAT THE NATION SHOULD NOT BE DISTRACTED BY ELECTIONS DURING 1979, THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC. BEARING THESE CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND, HE STATED THAT BOLIVIA SHOULD BE RETURNED TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN A PERIOD "BY NO MEANS IN EXCESS OF 24 MONTHS." HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS SCHEDULED COULD BE "MODIFIED" (PRESUMABLY SHORTENED) UPON THE JOINT RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE ARMED FORCES, AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES. PEREDA SUGGESTED THAT THE FOLLOWING POINTS MIGHT ALSO BE CONSIDERED:

- THE FORM OF THE ELECTORAL BALLOT.

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--THE APPORTIONMENT OF MINORITY REPRESENTATION.

--REGISTRATION PROCEDURES.

--THE FORM OF THE REGISTRATION DOCUMENT.

--GUIDELINES FOR POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATION.

--THE PROHIBITION OF ALL FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

HE CONCLUDED HIS THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRATIZATION BY STATING THAT HE WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS, AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE COMPLETELY IMPARTIAL.

5. PEREDA CLOSED HIS ADDRESS BY PLEDGING TO ENGAGE IN "FRANK, PERMANENT, AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE" WITH LABOR, AGRICULTURAL, POLITICAL AND OTHER NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD A SYSTEM OF "UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY THAT WOULD LINK THE STUDENTS TO THE NATION." IN ESSENCE, HE CONCLUDED, THE OBJECT OF HIS GOVERNMENT WAS TO LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR A SOLID STRUCTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. COMMENT: PEREDA'S STATED INTENTION TO RETURN BOLIVIA TO
DEMOCRATIC RULE WITHIN A PERIOD OF NOT LONGER THAN TWO YEARS
REFLECTS HIS EFFORT TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE WISHES
OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THOSE OF THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PARTIES.
WHILE WE UNDERSTAND HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE IS FOR GENERAL
ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER OF 1979 (WITH JANUARY 1980 INAUGURATION),
HIS NATIONAL DAY REMARKS ALLOW HIM THE FLEXIBILITY TO SLIDE THAT
DATE BACKWARD OR FORWARD AS POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS
DICTATE.
BOEKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEMOCRACY, SPEECHES, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAPAZ06301
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780322-0618
Format: TEL
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780892/aaaaczku.tel
Line Count: 125
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 036f9a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1821342
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PEREDA PLEDGES RETURN TO DEMOCRACY WITHIN 2 YEARS
TAGS: PINT, BL, (PEREDA ASBUN, JUAN)
To: STATE BOGOTA
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/036f9a67-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014